

Tri-City United

Rec Coaches Handbook





Contents

INTRODUCTION 3

GENERAL INFORMATION..... 3

1. Why do Kids Play Soccer? 3

2. Know Your Team 3

3. General Characteristics of Players 3

4. Players Equipment 4

5. Playing Surface 4

6. Practice Sessions 4

7. Practice Day/Time/Location..... 4

8. Concessions 5

9. SafeSport Training and Background Check 5

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS..... 5

1. Team pages 5

2. Co-Coaching..... 5

3. First Contact with your team 5

BEHAVIOR 6

1. Coaches 6

2. Parents 6

3. Players..... 7

GAME DAY..... 7

1. Game RSVPs 7

2. Game Rules 7

3. Referees 7



- 4. Game Schedules 7
- 5. Jerseys 7

- WEATHER GUIDELINES 8
 - 1. During practice 8
 - 2. Cancellations 8
 - 3. Heat..... 8
 - 4. Air Quality 8
 - 5. Lightning..... 8

- ADDITIONAL RESOURCES 8
 - 1. Soccer Parenting Association 8
 - 2. SportsEngine Help 8
 - 3. US Club Soccer Coach Licensing Courses 8
 - 4. US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies, and Guidelines 8
 - 5. Player Mental Health and Safety..... 9
 - 6. Concussions and head injury 9
 - 7. US Club Player First 9



INTRODUCTION

Tri-City United Soccer Club, a non-profit endeavor, is dedicated to fostering the growth of soccer across diverse skill levels within the Fargo/Moorhead/West Fargo community. Your role as a coach with TC United is invaluable, and we sincerely appreciate your time and effort. Whether you're a seasoned coach or new to the field, your involvement contributes significantly to the development of soccer in our region. Thank you for being part of our team!

It is TCU club’s mission to provide the youth in the community with an exceptional environment to play soccer and learn valuable life skills. Our Recreational Program is guided by three primary objectives, which are applicable to both players and coaches:

1. Have Fun
2. Active Participation
3. Education

Our Recreational Program is all about creating a warm and welcoming space where kids can have a blast playing soccer and staying active. We don't worry about standings or crowning champions here – it's all about the joy of the game! While every match may have a winner, the real focus is on the overall experience, not just the final score. So, let's lace up those cleats and have some fun!

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Why do Kids Play Soccer?

For fun, friends, fitness, and/or to develop skills. Kids play soccer for all sorts of reasons, and the recreational program is where they can have a fun while learning the game in a welcoming and fun environment.

2. Know Your Team

During activities, be mindful of matching up players of different sizes, ensuring that the biggest kids don't inadvertently overpower the smallest. Remember, we're not dealing with world-class athletes here; we're guiding growing and developing children. Take frequent water breaks, acknowledging that young ones tire quickly, and remember, there's no need for extra fitness training beyond simply enjoying the game.

3. General Characteristics of Players

Understanding the typical characteristics of your age group will help you set appropriate expectations for the players you coach. You can find specific age group information on the Coaches Resource page on our website at <https://www.tricityunited.org/reccoaches>.

Here are some “acceptable characteristics” separated by age group:

Prek – Kindergarten	1 st /2nd Grade	3 rd /4th Grade	5 th /6 th Grade
Short attention span	Longer attention span then U5/U6	Lengthened attention span	Beginning of puberty
Most individually oriented	Will do more group activities pairs is best	Still in motion but not as busy – can listen to very short explanation	Flexibility training begins to be important



Constantly in motion	Developing physical confidence	Gross and small motor skills becoming more refined	Can think in abstract terms
Little or no concern for team activities	Still constantly in motion	Beginning to think ahead in their play	Seek peers that are most like themselves
Physical coordination immature	Effort is synonymous with performance	Some are becoming more serious about their play	Popularity influences self-esteem
Eye hand or eye foot coordination primitive	Fragile self-concept and body image	Enjoy the uniforms and team association	Better understanding of small group tactics
Love to run, jump, roll, and climb	Love to run, jump, roll, and climb	Rapid gains in learning performance movement skills at increasingly sophisticated levels	Increased ability to acquire and apply knowledge
No sense of pace. Go all out for until they can't go anymore.	No sense of pace. Go all out for until they can't go anymore.	More inclined to want to play rather than being told to play	Beginning of player drop-out

4. Players Equipment

Game time players equipment and wearables rules:

- Players are not allowed to wear any type of jewelry.
- Players MUST have the TCU Rec reversible jersey. If they do not have one by the third week of the season, they are not allowed to play.
- All players are required to wear shin guards with socks pulled over them.

5. Playing Surface

Before the game starts, check the field for objects that may cause players to get injured. If the field is damaged, look for a staff member and they may be able to point you to another field.

6. Practice Sessions

Before each practice, please ensure you're fully prepared with a lesson plan. You can find a variety of lessons available on our website at <https://www.tricityunited.org/reccoaches>. Preferably have something written down to help guide your training session. You don't have to follow it word for word; because we know things don't always go the way we plan them. Planning ahead can ensure that you get the most out of your time together with your team. Please be sure to incorporate proper warmups as well as cool downs activities. If it gets too hot, it's important to plan for frequent water breaks during each session to help players recharge and stay hydrated.

7. Practice Day/Time/Location

As a volunteer coach we understand that your time is valuable. As such we give our volunteer coaches the control to decide when and where their team practices. It is recommended to first get input from your families about what will work best for them, but ultimately the decision is up to you as the coach. Practice fields are available upon request at any of our available facilities. Please keep in mind that for the Summer and Winter seasons practices are on the same day as games on the same field as the game.



8. Concessions

We'll have a variety of food and drinks available at our concession area for our outdoor leagues and at our TCU Indoor facility on game days. Spectators are welcome to bring their own refreshments to enjoy at the fields, but we kindly ask that families remember to tidy up after themselves. These fields are a shared community resource, and our club is fortunate to have the opportunity to use them. Let's all do our part to keep them clean and well-maintained.

9. SafeSport Training and Background Check

US Club Soccer mandates that volunteer coaches must complete the SafeSport training and a background check to coach recreational soccer. We will ensure that all coaches receive communication regarding SafeSport Training and background checks. This is crucial for maintaining a safe and secure environment for our players. Please keep an eye out for this communication.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

1. Team pages

All Recreational teams will have their own team page on the SportsEngine app. As a coach you will be able to add practices day/time to teams schedule, use the chat to communicate with the team and see the team's roster.

We have also created coaches' team pages for the specific season in which you are coaching. This is a private page, between coaches of the same age group.

Coaches technically have the power to change the team's name in the app, but you're not allowed to change it. That's because the team's name stays the same to keep things consistent and recognizable.

2. Co-Coaching

If you have another parent coaching the team with you, get in contact with them to discuss pre-season items such as practice locations/times, season goals/expectations, and any potential conflicts with games and practices.

If you don't have another coach, then it is recommended that you ask one of the parents to help assist and fill in if you can't make it to a game or practice. Soccer knowledge isn't crucial for assistant coaches. However, it is important that assistant coaches are passionate and are willing to help the head coach.

3. First Contact with your team

Please contact your families as soon as possible. You can send a message in the team chat on the SportsEngine app. Be sure to include:

- Your name
- Specific instructions regarding the first practice
 - Date, Time, Location
 - Team name and maybe something identifiable about yourself. A picture does wonders for helping the families to familiarize themselves with you.
- Mention any season goals you may have for the team and also include the goals of the Rec Program:
 - Fun, Active Participation and Education
- What to bring to practices and games:
 - Water bottle, shin guards, fully inflated age-appropriate soccer ball, etc.



- Remind parents to put their child's name and phone number on their ball, water bottle, etc. Have each family respond to your welcome message indicating that they received it.

BEHAVIOR

1. Coaches

As coaches we should strive to create a positive example and create an optimal environment for success. Set an example for your parents by applauding and cheering good play from both teams. Cheer and applaud as a reaction to play rather than in anticipation. If you have an issue with another team, player, coach, or referee, please reach out to the staff and the program director.

While winning is part of the game and competition is exciting, let's try to avoid running up the score during the game. Remember, in every match, there are winners and there are those who don't win. Let's keep the focus on enjoying the game and fostering a positive experience for all players involved. Kids do not need to win by a large margin to feel good about the way they played. If you're 3 or 4 goals ahead, please make some changes or put restrictions on how your players can score goals. Be creative and make it tough on your team so they get a challenge no matter who the opponent. For the sake of all players involved, please remember this is recreational soccer and keep the three goals of the Recreational Program in mind (you'll notice winning isn't one of them). When your team is ahead by 3 to 4 goals or if the game seems to be going smoothly, encourage your team to take on some challenges. Here are a few suggestions:

- Score on the ground.
- Score on a pass back.
- Score on a first-time touch.
- Combine with a give 'n go or overlapping run before shooting.
- Complete 5 passes before shooting.
- Complete 3 supporting passes to your goalkeeper throughout the half.
- Etc. Get creative and challenge your players.

2. Parents

It's essential for parents to maintain positive behavior during recreational soccer games, setting a good example for their children and promoting a supportive atmosphere for everyone involved. Additionally, allowing players the freedom to make decisions on their own is a crucial aspect of their development both on and off the field. This fosters independence, problem-solving skills, and confidence, which are invaluable traits they'll carry with them beyond the soccer field. Let's all work together to create a respectful and encouraging environment where players can thrive and enjoy the game to its fullest. If you are having issues with parents, please let the staff know and contact the program director.

In our efforts to provide a fun and safe environment for your child, we have secured memberships with *Soccer Parent Resource Center* for all our parents and coaches. This resource offers courses, videos, monthly live webinars and much more to help parents make their child feel inspired on the field.

Please visit <https://soccerparentresourcecenter.com/register/club-membership/tri-city-united/> to register and access your free membership.



3. Players

All players must play at least 50% of each game. Players should rotate between all positions (defense, attack, goalkeeper). During the season a player should play about the same amount in each spot on the field. Help them become well-rounded soccer players by allowing them to experience playing every position on the field.

Stress that players always exhibit positive sportsmanship. Without another team enjoying the spirit of competition there wouldn't be a game to play. Value your opponent. After games, be sure to line up the kids at the half line to "shake" hands and tell the other team's players and coaches "Good Game." Coaches must participate in this to lead by example.

Please see that your team picks up all trash after your games or practices when leaving the fields. These fields belong to the community and as such it is important that we take care of them so they can continue to support soccer well into the future.

GAME DAY

1. Game RSVPs

Coaches should check RSVPs for games at least a couple of days ahead of time to ensure you have players and good number of subs. Sending reminders on the team chat is a good way to get everyone to RSVP.

2. Game Rules

The league rules are posted on the coaches' resources page at <https://www.tricityunited.org/reccoaches>.

3. Referees

Please keep in mind that most referees working the younger ages for the rec program are beginners or very new to refereeing and they are KIDS themselves, so mistakes will happen. Please show respect and refrain from yelling at the ref for a missed call. Also, if a parent is yelling and harassing the ref, please send a message to the team chat reminding them to be respectful. If it continues, please let the staff know.

4. Game Schedules

Game schedules will be posted on the team page calendar at least one week prior to the start of the season.

5. Jerseys

The home team will wear white. The away team will wear black.

These reversible jerseys can be pre-ordered during the registration or purchased on the first gameday at the field location.

Please make sure all kids are wearing their jerseys for the game, as we've had kids try to play on teams when they are not registered for the program.



WEATHER GUIDELINES

1. During practice

Decisions to practice are ultimately at the discretion of the coach. However, TCU may cancel all activities if weather conditions are worse than recommended by US Club soccer or to protect field conditions.

2. Cancellations

Rain is not a reason to cancel games, soccer is a sport that can be played in the rain. The only reason TCU would cancel games due to rain is to protect field conditions.

If cancellation is necessary, TCU will send an email to everyone by 3PM for weekday games the day of the game, and by Friday evening for Saturday games.

Cancelled games will be rescheduled unless we are not able to find a day available.

3. Heat

TCU will follow all US Club Soccer guidelines on when is safe to play during a heat wave. When the heat is higher than normal, we will instruct referees to add one water break per half.

4. Air Quality

If the air quality is affected by wildfires, we will use US Club Soccer guidelines to determine if it is safe to play. If needed, we will add water breaks or cancel games.

5. Lightning

It is required that we have 30 consecutive minutes with no sights of lightning to be able to play.

If lightning is spotted within 8 miles of the fields during game time, gameplay will be stopped, and everyone will be asked to vacate the fields and get into their cars or seek shelter under a roof (if available). We will wait 15 minutes before restarting the games. Games will be restarted from the point where it was stopped.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. Soccer Parenting Association

Learn more about Soccer Parent Resource Center:

<https://www.tricityunited.org/soccerparenting>

2. SportsEngine Help

Helpful links for instructions SportsEngine account and profile management:

<https://www.tricityunited.org/sehelp>

3. US Club Soccer Coach Licensing Courses

Read about what it takes to become a licensed coach:

<https://usclubsoccer.org/programs/coach-education/us-soccer-education/courses/>

4. US Club Soccer Bylaws, Policies, and Guidelines

Find details and links to FIFA laws of the Game, US Soccer Federation policies and more:

<https://usclubsoccer.org/bylaws-policies-guidelines/>



5. Player Mental Health and Safety

Resources from US Soccer to help deal with players mental health, physical health, safety and more:

<https://www.recognizetorecover.org/>

6. Concussions and head injury

US Club concussions and head injury Guidelines:

<https://usclubsoccer.org/headinjuries/>

7. US Club Player First

Learn about US Club Soccer Player First philosophy:

<https://usclubsoccer.org/playersfirst/>